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4 October 1960

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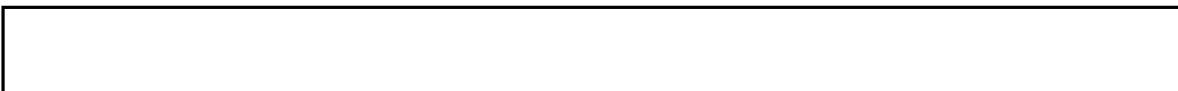
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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DAILY BRIEF

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

Iraq: An Iraqi military court has ordered the country's chief Communist newspaper, Ittihad al-Shab, to suspend publication for ten months. Ittihad was the official daily newspaper of the orthodox Communist party, which also published an English-language weekly version. The closing appears to be part of a general press crackdown in retaliation for articles critical of the Qasim regime, which still is trying to suppress both Communist and "nationalist" extremism. The Communists, however, are likely to be more damaged by this policy than are the "nationalists." OK (Page 3)

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Mali-Czechoslovakia: A special Czech mission arrived in Bamako on 30 September, and the early conclusion of trade and other agreements between the Mali Republic (former French Soudan) and Czechoslovakia appears likely. Mali officials are reported ready to sign a barter trade deal and to grant stopover rights for the recently established Czech air service to Guinea. [Mali's leftist interior minister--a potential rival for power of President Keita--may also ask the Czechs to provide small arms for the militia and police.]

[] last month the Czechs, while renewing earlier economic overtures to the Soudanese, assured the provision of whatever arms Mali might require.

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South Africa: The government of Prime Minister Verwoerd, whose Nationalist party has long been committed to the reconstruction of the Union of South Africa as a republic, is bringing the issue before the white electorate in a referendum on 5 October. A close contest is expected. A change in the Union's form of government would require the other members of the Commonwealth to pass on South Africa's continued membership. Several African and Asian members have warned that they would oppose this, thereby placing new strains on the Commonwealth.

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Qasim Regime Cracks Down on Iraqi Press

Iraq's chief Communist newspaper, Ittihad al-Shab, has been ordered suspended for ten months by an Iraqi military court, ostensibly for commenting on a trial while it was before the court. Al-Thawra, one of the largest anti-Communist dailies, was suspended for a like period at the same time. Ittihad al-Shab was the official newspaper of the orthodox Communist party and had a daily circulation of nearly 15,000, large by Iraqi standards. It also published Iraqi Review, an English-language weekly version, which apparently will also succumb.

In late August Governor General Abdi admonished the press to refrain from extremism and criticism of the regime. However, this warning was largely ignored, and several other papers were suspended. Included among these were two anti-Communist organs and one pro-Communist. Another pro-Communist paper which had been shut down previously was allowed to reappear in late September.

The closures of Ittihad and al-Thawra are the government's severest blows against the press. Qasim is reported to have ordered the release of the papers' editors, who were sentenced to jail at the same time. There are indications that Qasim's campaign against irresponsibility in the press may result in the shutdown of all Communist-line and violently nationalist papers, leaving a number of moderate nationalist ones to dominate the field. This appears to be in line with Qasim's present policy of cracking down on all extremism, from either right or left. [redacted]

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Mali-Czech Ties Developing

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The Mali Republic (former French Soudan), which proclaimed its sovereignty on 22 September, appears to be moving toward the early conclusion of trade and other agreements with Czechoslovakia. Such arrangements, which presumably would include the establishment of diplomatic relations, would be in line with the publicly expressed intentions of Mali leaders to cooperate with all friendly countries and accept help from "all sources." Privately, however, President Modibo Keita and other moderate officials have expressed a strong desire to avoid becoming dependent on the Sino-Soviet bloc.

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[A Czech mission headed by Vice Interior Minister Klima arrived in Bamako on 30 September from Conakry for talks with Mali officials.]

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[Mali officials planned to indicate to the Czech delegation their readiness to sign a barter-trade deal providing for an exchange of peanuts--Mali's chief export item--for Czech industrial equipment and to grant stopover rights for the recently established Czech air service to Guinea. Mali's Interior Minister Madeira Keita--leader of an extremist faction in the Mali regime--was said to be considering asking the Czechs to provide small arms for the militia and police, both of which are under his control. He may also have in mind a request for personnel to train these internal security forces--a function the Czechs have been performing in Guinea since early 1959.] Madeira Keita returned with the Czech delegation from a visit he had just concluded in Conakry.

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The arrival of the Czechs follows closely the appearance in Moscow and Prague last month of a special exploratory mission from the Bamako regime. [At that time Czech authorities reportedly proposed a barter agreement and also gave assurances that Czechoslovakia could provide whatever arms Mali might require.] In early June a Czech commercial representative who visited Dakar as the guest of the now-dissolved Mali Federation of Senegal and Soudan urged the conclusion of a barter-trade agreement and a technical assistance program.

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South African Referendum on Establishment of a Republic

The government of Prime Minister Verwoerd, whose Nationalist party has long been committed to the reconstitution of South Africa as a republic, is bringing the issue before the white electorate in a referendum on 5 October. Both the Afrikaner community--the backbone of support for Verwoerd and the Nationalists--and the English-speaking opposition have conducted strenuous campaigns, and the total vote is expected to reach 1,700,000--more than 90 percent of those registered. Recent polls indicate that at least 80,000 voters are still undecided, and the vote could go either way. Ultimate responsibility for the change rests with the South African parliament, where Verwoerd commands a majority of two-to-one.

A change in government structure would raise the question of South Africa's relationship to the Commonwealth, since the other members would be required to pass on its continued membership. Several African and Asian nations--notably Ghana and Malaya--are vocal in their opposition to the Union's racial policies. London would probably seek to prevent South Africa's expulsion because of the additional strain such a move would impose on the Commonwealth.

A loss of membership would eventually mean exclusion from the Commonwealth preference system, from which several South African industries benefit to the extent of about \$14,000,000 a year. Verwoerd has nevertheless indicated that his government will "proceed with" the establishment of a republic, regardless of Commonwealth disapproval.

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